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## Education, Freedom and Temporality

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*Since it was first published in 2011, 'A Manifesto for Education' by Gert Biesta and Karl Anders Säfström has received numerous enthusiastic reviews and been hailed as providing 'an alternative vision for education'. This paper attempts to explore what the authors refer to as the ironic usage of this genre of writing in relation to its message. The authors diagnose a problem in education related to the modern understanding of time, and they suggest an alternative 'non-temporality' in which we 'stay in the tension between "what is" and "what is not"'. While I appreciate the Manifesto's attempt to offer criticism based on the link between freedom and temporality in education, I take issue with aspects of their analysis. In reading of Martin Heidegger, I discuss temporality and freedom in which the concept of time in education is understood in terms of human freedom as possibility. Further discussion on freedom is made in terms of nothingness in Heidegger and the Kyoto School. With reference to a brief analysis of the Chinese character, mu, I attempt to offer an account of freedom in relation with nothingness.*

Since published in 2011, *A Manifesto for Education* by Gert Biesta and Karl Anders Säfström (hereafter the Manifesto) has received numerous responses in various European countries and more. It has been translated in many languages. Many teachers unions' have shown their enthusiasm for the Manifesto by republishing it in their journals and newsletters. The passionate response perhaps can be explained as due to its attempt to articulate 'an alternative vision for education from within the field, rather than of education from an external economic or neoliberal perspective.' (Editors' note, 2012, p. 667) The affirmation of speaking *for education* in the Manifesto is perhaps a valuable resistance to current movements in education which seek solutions outside of education. Meanwhile, on the contrary, education has too often been conceived in terms of tangible or material matters.

Such enthusiasm however is perhaps not purely attributable to the substance of the text but also to the form it adopts. The authors present these ideas through what must count as a rather unconventional educational research format or genre: a manifesto. It is through the Manifesto that they intend to 'stand up for education'. They do this with a degree of irony, conscious that what they want to convey is not something that is readily amenable to explicit formulation.

Manifesto is a powerful genre to declare views on political or artistic matters, especially views of a bold and visionary kind. In a sense, then, they have marked out new ground in educational research by exploiting this material form. It fuses the descriptive and the prescriptive, always a sensitive disjunction for educational research. As Biesta puts it, however, nowadays 'a manifesto can only be performed in an ironic manner' since:

We know all too well, after all, that no manifesto that has ever been written—be it in the domain of art or in the domain of politics—has ever managed to change the world... As

an ironic form—or as an ironic performance—a manifesto can be nothing more than an attempt to speak and, through this, create an opening, a moment of interruption. That is precisely what this manifesto tries to do and what we try to do with this manifesto. We try to speak, not simply about education, but also for education. (M. p. 542)<sup>1</sup>

Does the acknowledgement of irony here enable the claim in the Manifesto? Questioning the use of the genre, however, is not the sole project of my own paper. Their suggestion that we should ‘stay in the tension’ is based on the diagnosis of a current problem in education that is tied to the modern understanding of time. I appreciate its criticism based on the link between freedom and temporality in education. They suggest an alternative of non-temporality, in which one stays in the tension at the present. I shall mainly discuss the Manifesto in terms of temporality and freedom through a reading of Martin Heidegger. I shall argue for the concept of time in education in terms of human freedom as *possibility*.

## 1. WHY A MANIFESTO? AN IRONIC GENRE FOR FREEDOM

In this rather unconventional education research format, the selected genre delivers the message that we should ‘stand up for education’. Hence, it seeks to convey an opinion or gesture to the public in a suitable form and in a way that will have impact. How does the form relate to the content? This is a question I shall shortly investigate.

The Manifesto as a form typically provides a very short text, concisely expressed, in order to deliver a message clearly and effectively. Although such clear and concise texts may be effective in delivering their message, they forfeit in the process the opportunity for more developed and more lucid discussion. I should confess that, although I was fascinated by the text, almost as if I was kidnapped by it, I found myself looking for more precise discussion. One such discussion that is needed in particular is on temporality, and I return to this in the next section of my paper.

Another characteristic of the genre is that it offers a clear vision or a message, especially regarding a pressing matter or an urgent need. ‘Standing up for education’ is the motto of the Manifesto, and this fits the genre. A manifesto’s motto can function as an exemplary reference for what matters. Guides to *how to* write a personal manifesto, which one can easily find on Google, stress this: ‘Don’t waste your time on things that don’t serve your manifesto... Stay focused on what you want.’<sup>2</sup> The genre itself functions to deliver a visionary image. This is the very nature of the genre, a genre that is plainly prescriptive.

With this in mind, let us briefly recall what the Manifesto says. The authors analyse two kinds of current criticism on education ‘for not delivering what it is supposed to deliver’ that they put the criticisms in two terms: populism and idealism. The former, which they connect with ‘what is’, takes education as of individual tastes of instrumental choices in the process of an adaptation to existing society—that is, a kind of socialisation. The latter, which they identify with idealism of various kinds, e.g. democracy, justice, solidarity, presents education as a utopian dream, that they call ‘what is not’. (M. p. 540) Their argument is that, with either orientation, education fails to take a proper responsibility for the present. To tie education to ‘what is’ can:

either be adaptation to the ‘what is’ of society, in which case education becomes socialisation, or it can be adaptation to the ‘what is’ of the individual child or student,

thus starting from such 'facts'... In both cases education loses its interest in freedom, it loses its interest in an 'excess' that announces something new and unforeseen. (M. p. 541)

To tie education to 'what is not', on the other hand, cannot be a solution since:

If we go there, we tie up education with utopian dreams. To keep education away from pure utopia is not a question of pessimism but rather a matter of not saddling education with unattainable hopes that defer freedom rather than making it possible in the here being responsible for the present. (M. p. 541)

The authors' criticism is of the temporality-oriented, prescriptive conceptualisation of education in which what matters for education—freedom—becomes illusionary. They suggest, instead, that by retaining the tension between what is and what is not, by living in this tension, freedom in education can be properly conceived. Thus:

To stay in the tension between 'what is' and 'what is not' is therefore also a matter of being responsible for the present... From an educational perspective, both extremes appear as irresponsible. We therefore need to stay in the tension. (M. p. 541)

This suggestion is neither for the future nor for the fixed present. To stay in the tension is to consider freedom in education for here and now. In both what is and what is not, education has been conceived as a linear process of growth and learning, and this often serves to divide the present from the future—as, for example, where the mature and the immature are differentiated. It is true that in many contexts educational goals have endlessly been postponed, with the present relegated to the secondary status of the 'not yet' or incomplete. The Manifesto attempts to bring freedom back into the educational present, 'the educational moment', and this is figured as responsibility for the present. Their argument thus heads towards the suggestion: 'Could it be, therefore, that we need to take temporality out of education in order to capture something educationally, something that is neither about what is, nor about what is not yet (but will come one day)?' (M. p. 543)

Putting aside the problem of non-temporality, which I shall consider shortly, I find an apparent contradiction between the substance of the message and the form of the Manifesto. The genre already functions as something prescriptive and exemplary, in the name of something that has not yet appeared: a proper educational moment, according to the authors, has been neglected in both extremes of what is and what is not; we should consider the educational moment; in this way we might properly consider freedom in education. Within this structure, along with the use of the genre, the Manifesto becomes prescriptive and exemplary with the criticism of the current education problems. Then, would it not be ascribed to one of 'what is not'? In this logic, freedom of the authors' kind would hardly be remote from one of the ideal kinds of freedom.

The Manifesto is an interesting polemic against the common understanding of time and freedom in education. As soon as it appears in the form of a manifesto, however, their suggestion cannot be exempted from one of their criticisms. The message claims to reject both what is and what is not, but the leading suggestion they make falls into *what is not*. Commitment to '*what is not*' is inherent in their use of the genre, a manifesto. The Manifesto chooses the prescriptive genre

to criticise or overcome the prescriptive nature of education as it appears in what is and what is not, and the irony of this seems to go beyond the irony they intend. But let us examine this further.

Irony in the adoption of the form of the manifesto is not unprecedented. Kathleen M. Jamieson (1975) gives the example of the contradiction between content and form when the Founding Fathers deliberately choose monarchical forms while disavowing monarchy (p. 414). But this does not lessen the responsibility of the person who adopts the genre. The authors of the Manifesto imply a kind of necessity about their adoption of the genre: they want to speak outside the received language of the academy (the language of psychology or sociology, for example) and in a form that will recognisably speak *for* education. As Biesta puts this, the ironic form of the Manifesto is no more than a way to speak for education. (M. p. 542) But, as Vatz and Rabin put it, this is because 'the rhetor is personally responsible for his rhetoric regardless of "genres"'. (quoted in Jamieson) Likewise, the irony of the genre in the Manifesto should be less the subject of our concern than the nature of its claims.

The irony, however, is not just to do with use of the genre: it has to do with the nature of freedom itself. The freedom advocated in the Manifesto is posited in the realm of non-temporality, and this needs a lengthy discussion. Biesta concedes that 'as the manifesto is only a short text, much is left unspoken and unexplored', especially regarding the details of what it would mean to take temporality out of education. (Biesta, 2012, p. 2) But this is ironic in my view because the problem arises not only from the lack of explanatory detail but from its alleged disconnection from temporality.

## 2. WHAT COULD BE MEANT BY THE NON-TEMPORALITY OF EDUCATION AND FREEDOM?

The Manifesto posits the problem of education and freedom in the domain of the understanding of time. In this part, I shall discuss the nature of freedom and temporality advanced in the Manifesto, based on Biesta's keynote paper at the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain Annual Conference in Oxford in 2012. In that paper Biesta accuses the modern understanding of time of excluding freedom from education. Yet freedom, Biesta contends, is a key concept for education, which he emphasises with such expressions as 'what matters educationally in education' and 'what makes education educational'. And here again he warns that if education is tied either to 'what is' or 'what is not' in this modern temporal logic in education, then freedom 'runs the risk of disappearing from the scene'. (2012, p. 6)

Non-temporality is contested by Biesta through the comparison of the modern temporality of education. To do so, Biesta identifies a distinction between what is *not* and what is *not yet*. The distinction is in fact crucial for the argument. What is not yet refers to what is to arrive in the future.<sup>3</sup> The idea of '*not yet*' relegates the present to the secondary status of the incomplete whilst the predetermined future is placed in priority. Education, in the meantime, no longer focuses on the present but lurks in wait of the illusory ideal of the future. Without *yet*, thus, *here and now*, as *he puts non-temporal*, becomes a matter in the tension between the two: what is and what is not.

This is, however, hardly convincing since the suggestion is still attached to the business of what is not. Freedom of this kind is understood in terms of a lack in current educational practice and experience. Freedom is then understood in relation to what is not. Moreover, the idea of taking '*yet*'

out of what is *not yet* is drawn from the structures of modern temporality, and this does not at all make it non-temporal but rather invokes a non-modern temporality. As Biesta also puts this, the target here is 'the temporal logic of modern education.' (Biesta, 2012, p. 6) But if this is so, a better expression for 'taking temporality out of education' might be 'taking *modern* temporality out of education'.

In fact, a sense of the modern temporality of freedom is hinted at in the Manifesto. The authors' interest in freedom appears as the freedom of the child. The nature of such freedom is distinguished from other types of freedom as thus:

Freedom is not license. It is neither about 'anything goes' nor about individual preference and choice. Freedom is *relational* and therefore inherently difficult. This is why educational freedom is not about the absence of authority but about authority that carries *an orientation towards* freedom with it. (M. pp. 540-541, *italics mine*)

The freedom that the Manifesto considers is not about individual autonomy. Such freedom is rejected in the Manifesto since it inherently bears the structure of freedom conceived in terms of modern temporality, which places the present of being in relation to the 'not yet'. But one problem here is that the authors also use temporal terms to describe freedom, such as '*an orientation towards*'.

The preposition 'towards' implies distance and direction. If my pencil were here with me, I would not make a move toward the place where I placed it before. *Orientation* implies a sense of direction. Likewise, if something is 'towards freedom', then freedom is assumed to be detached from it. This seems no different so far from the terms of modern temporality. This expression already exhibits the temporal proclivity of freedom. In other words, in the absence of a temporal structure of education, the authors' suggestion of freedom would hardly be conceivable.<sup>4</sup> And if it was not meant as a rejection of temporality itself, then it naturally calls for an alternative concept of temporality, that I think one of the fruits of the Manifesto, which is to generate more discussions *for* education.

I do agree with the criticism of the modern temporal logic of education. Besides, to ponder the construction of this kind of refinement of expression may seem to be a rather 'academic' matter and not productive. But there is more at stake than a mere question of expression. If we take seriously the problem of modern temporality, discussion needs to focus on the possibility of an alternative understanding of temporality. It seems unlikely that we shall find this in the structures of non-temporality, because the emphasis of non-temporality is on the present, *here and now*. By emphasising the present, non-temporality continuously loses its real sense of time since the present is not separable in this way. Indeed the tendency to emphasise this specific sense of time seems not remote from the problem of modern temporality itself. The rest of the paper is devoted to an alternative conception of time in relation to education, and I shall approach this in the light of the work of Martin Heidegger.

### 3. THE PROBLEM OF THE PRESENT AND FREEDOM AS POSSIBILITY

Biesta (2012) focuses on how education could work *without time*. It is acknowledged that the idea that time might be taken out of education may sound implausible, but he tries to be more specific:

Because education seems to be so fundamentally caught up with a particular notion of temporality—not only at the level of ideas but also at the level of the whole educational infrastructures...—the suggestion to take time out of the educational equation may be quite counter-intuitive. (Biesta, 2012, p. 6)

Taking this risk, Biesta reminds us that the whole project is concerned with freedom. (ibid.) Education and freedom are also linked in the Manifesto: ‘to stand up for education’ means ‘to stand up for the possibility of freedom.’ (M. p. 542) It implies that the possibility of freedom is close to the essence of education itself. The question is how they are related to each other.

Let us, albeit briefly, try to get closer to Biesta’s ideas on how education, in terms of subjectification and freedom, would work *without time*. Subjectification indicates one’s subject as a speaking subject based on the freedom to speak. The speaking subject is not to be understood primarily in linguistic terms, to do with the process of learning a language, as commonly understood. To speak needs to be understood in relation to the experience of being addressed. To be addressed is a matter of *recognising* that the other is addressing me. A speaking subject makes a choice that must be understood in terms of freedom, and this is a matter of responsibility. (Biesta, 2012, p. 9)

In the light of this Biesta advocates an education conducive to subjectification without time. Such subjectification appears here and now via being addressed and taking responsibility. However, has his claim, *without time*, actually escaped from modern temporality? Heidegger would say, “‘The present’ [‘die Gegenwart’] has a peculiar ambiguity.” (CT. p. 63) For the present refers both the present place and the present time, i.e. *here and now*.

The more we emphasise the importance of the present, the more we get involved in the business of modern temporality in education. For such vocabulary is already and inherently embedded in the grammar of a traditional understanding of time. In the same way, the idea of being *without time*, the approach of Biesta and Säfström, in fact echoes the idea of being *with time*. By contrast the emphasis should be on the nature of time itself.

Furthermore, the question must be how time and education are related to each other, for without this the discussion will inevitably fall back into the discourse of ‘what is not’. Questions should first be asked about the meaning of possibility, freedom, temporality and their relation to education. In this very question, we may get an approach to the first question, *about time*.

In the first place, possibility is an elusive concept. It tends to be understood as something not yet actualised. Possibility, however, is neither a complementary set in parallel to actuality nor a string of events that are not yet actualised but may in the end appear. Let me describe myself, for instance. I am quitting smoking at the moment. This expresses that I *used* to smoke and I *will be* a non-smoker. The statement also addresses both facts that I am a non-smoker as well as I am not a non-smoker at the same time. I am not yet a non-smoker, since I still carry the stain of the habit enough to say that I am quitting smoking. If I had never been a smoker, the question would not

even come up—at least, not in the same way. However, I do not at the moment actually smoke. I can thus perhaps claim that I am a non-smoker but not in the same ways as those non-smokers out there who are freaked out when they discover someone smoking in a public space. In this respect, my credentials as a non-smoker remain within the possibility of becoming. In this example, possibility is not a matter of waiting for the arrival of an actuality but an aspect of my being that encompasses my actuality. The smoking example applies to me, but this general point about possibility applies to all human beings. I think we cannot imagine an animal existing in this condition, but this *is* the human condition.

The smoking example serves to show that possibility exists beyond actuality. However, possibility is not a matter of any capacity or decision but a dimension of my existence. Possibility, for Heidegger, indicates the mode of the world in which I am. Heidegger's most celebrated idea is perhaps *being-in-the-world*. An attribute of being-in-the-world is, in fact, *understanding* the world. In understanding there is opened up the possibility of things as much as of my own being. Such understanding appears through *projecting*: 'I understand the world' indicates 'I exist in the world as projecting.' *Entwurf*, the German for 'projection', brings to light etymologically the sense of throwing something off or throwing something forward, in the sense of 'designing or sketching some project which is to be carried through'. (BT, p. 185) This projecting is throwing my being towards my possibility. In projecting, as Heidegger explains, Dasein as 'beyond itself' ["über sich hinaus"], i.e. "*Being-ahead-of-itself*". (BT, p. 236) Being-ahead-of-itself is a projecting towards being itself. Here is a link between possibility and freedom. Dasein's being-in-the world is *ahead-of-itself-being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside*. This rather conspicuous expression reflects Heidegger's insistent avoidance of a certain traditional understanding of being in relation to the three dimensions of past, present, and future, as understood in modern terms. Possibility [*Möglichkeit*] is characterised by freedom (BT, p. 237). Freedom grounds, as in the smoking example, the conditions in which I can be this or that, authentic or inauthentic.<sup>5</sup> In *Being and Time*, Freedom is neither an ideal to achieve nor the ground for ethical decision-making. Freedom as a phenomenon is specifically described in terms of possibility, which reveals the mode of Dasein as being ahead of itself, i.e. projecting.<sup>6</sup>

Possibility is the way to understand the present. Heidegger emphasise that the 'present can be revealed as future, which belongs to possibility' (modified from Kisiel, 2005, p. 197).<sup>7</sup> In this, possibility does not refer to some static future moment on a line stretching from the present. Possibility indicates a projecting towards my own being, such that I relate to that being through understanding. Through this projecting, through freedom as possibility, we understand the world. This is the nature of our being-in-the-world.

Before proceeding to the final section of this paper, I would like to acknowledge a possible complication in the argument, though space prevents full development of this. It is true that at certain points—for example,—Biesta (2012) enriches his account with reference to Zygmunt Bauman, and by implication to Emmanuel Levinas, and the notion that human being is always structured by a relation to 'the Other'. For Levinas, human being is to be understood in terms of the approach of the Other—that is, through being addressed. In this respect, the relation to the Other must be understood as prior to the relation to other objects in the world. Heidegger's being-in-the-world seems in this respect not to recognise sufficiently the priority of the human Other over the otherness of objects, or of those alongside whom I happen to stand. The concept of



being-with (*Mit-sein*), which substantiates for Heidegger the existence of the other, is satirised by Levinas as a relation of 'marching together'. Heidegger's being-with implies a relation where one is related to the other through a common purpose or shared characteristics. For Levinas, by contrast, being-with is facing no-where else than towards the Other: it is to be addressed by the Other, always already addressed.

Likewise, ethics, before ontology, is epitomised by the face, which Levinas describes as a 'concrete abstraction'. It is out of this that the here and now is constituted. The face indicates that I am judged, I am under judgment, now and always. Every day is judgement day, which is not an event to be identified on some future calendar: judgment day is now. And this diachronously cuts across the chronology of my being. In this respect it might be claimed that, in contrast to Heidegger's ontology, the significance of the present must be characterised first and foremost in terms of ethical judgement—hence, Levinas's 'ethics before ontology'. Yet this is emphatically not to say that this present implies a non-temporality, as if we could step outside time. It is essentially temporal in terms of this cutting across of chronological time, so that no present moment is exempt from the time of judgement.

This criticism of Heidegger's conception of otherness is in no way a denial of projection. It is rather its more rigorous specification, the urgent reminder that our projecting should not be reduced to some kind of unproblematic, common, unidirectional purposiveness. In other words, acknowledgement of the address that comes from the Other, through which one is always already cast in responsibility, does not remove the argument I am advancing regarding temporality and freedom as possibility. Rather it reaffirms and reinforces the critique of atemporality.

#### 4. EDUCATION AS PROJECT

The notion of non-temporality perhaps is a rhetorical expression which I have not developed enough of a sense of English to enjoy. However, the negative prefix certainly limits other possibilities of understanding temporality in education and freedom. The final task of the paper is to show the positive relation between freedom and education in the light of temporality.

The Manifesto is in part a response to Jacques Rancière's critique of a temporal understanding of inequality, an understanding oriented towards overcoming inequality in the future. Considering the question of equality in education, the authors suggest a non-temporal alternative, along the lines of the principle that 'equality [what is not] co-exists with inequality [what is]'. (Biesta, 2012, p. 8) Non-temporality, thus, is an intellectual device that can be used to 'stage' dissensus—figured here as the tension between what is and what is not. Seen within this structure, more conventional criticism regarding overzealousness in education about a predetermined future turns out not to be a sufficient condition for the negation of temporality. For what is negated there, strictly speaking, is 'predetermined time'. Besides, the authors take the view that education, like freedom, is fundamentally historical:

It is, therefore, the place where freedom appears... To stay in the tension between 'what is' and 'what is not' thus means to take history seriously and to take education as fundamentally historical—that is, open to events, to the new and the unforeseen—rather

than as an endless repetition of what already is or as a march towards a predetermined future that may never arrive. (M. p. 541)

Such historicity and freedom is inherently temporal. So the question we must be concerned with is how temporality is to be understood. Previously I considered the point that projecting or being ahead of oneself is the nature of freedom as possibility. Projecting indicates that aspect of our being through which we understand the world. 'As projecting,' Heidegger claims, 'understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it is its possibilities as possibilities' (BT, p. 185) Thus, projecting is not a programmatic linkage to a given task or aim, equality or whatever it may be, but a basic mode of understanding as my being this and that. Possibility is shown through our projecting in the world.

Projecting as inherent in education perhaps explains the reason that the traditional understanding of time is tied programmatically to the future. Let us then think of education as a project in this sense, not as a programme or plan. The programme connotes a sense of planning or proclamation (rooted in the Latin, *programma*) or the written public notice (in Greek, also, *programma*).<sup>8</sup> Education has a certain business with public space, but what the programme tends to emphasise is the fixed, written plan. We must fit in to the programme. The outcome of the programme is also expected at the end of the practice. Furthermore, the idea of the programme naturally separates the designer and the user of the programme. A programmer usually refers to a programme designer. The programmer can spend time studying the prospective user in order to develop a better programme, e.g. by designing a user-friendly programme. The designing process is inevitably separated from actual usage of the programme. Before releasing the programme the designer will set up beta tests so that again a time-gap between development and usage is created. And this, as the Manifesto also implies, is embedded in the linear conception of time in education.

The project, by contrast, retains the connotation of throwing (-ject) forward (pro-), as is crucial for the Heideggerian notion of understanding. Projecting preserves its sense of becoming as understanding, an understanding that never settles down and that remains the business of the 'projector', the one projecting.<sup>9</sup> In projecting, time appears to be essentially futural.<sup>10</sup> Heidegger writes: 'To be futural [*zukünftig-sein*] means to be "temporal" ["zeitlich"] sein]. Here, temporal does not mean "in time" but time itself.' (CT. 49) In this, for Heidegger 'the basic phenomenon of time is the future.' (Dahlstrom, 2005, p. 160) Possibility is *being, projecting* as freedom. In other words, freedom as possibility is ascribed to one's understanding relationship to futural time. Being-ahead-of-myself is a projecting towards the finitude of my being. From the point of finitude, being-in-the-world as possibility becomes meaningful: '[it] can thus come to have a clear vision', Heidegger writes, 'for the accidents of the Situation that has been disclosed.' (BT, p. 436) The choice that is linked to freedom in Heidegger does not arise in confronting dilemmas or in plumping for this or that, but appears within my understanding of my being as being-in-the-world, and as we have seen this understanding is opened up only in relation to possibility.<sup>11</sup>

Through the idea of projection (*Entwurf*) in this respect is linked to the nature of identity in Klaus Mollenhauer (2005). Mollenhauer claims identity only exists as fiction (Fiktion) not as experience of concrete events. And he emphasises such fiction is necessary for education. For this fiction, as Mollenhauer claims, represents not a static object so called identity itself but only my relation to the idea of identity which is open to the future in projecting. Likewise, in understanding

of the identity, the temporal nature of education is the core of its practices. In this respect, projecting is not to be reduced to the aim of education in an unattainable future, for our engagement in and recognition of the world always inherently involves projecting.

At this point, my understanding of *mu* (無 nothingness) is related to the Heideggerian sense of freedom as possibility, projecting, becoming. The Chinese character, *mu* (nothingness) is literally consisted of fire and bush. In terms of the composition, it can be interpreted the forest on the fire, or the forest with no trees (艸-林+火(灬)=無). Even so, the Chinese character *mu* (無) displays not the outcome of the burning but the becoming of the burning, something in the middle of burning. In etymological sense, the meaning of *mu* represents the idea of the dynamic of burning, which I interpret here as becoming.

Emptiness is not a concrete being somewhere in the world which consists of space and time, but a contemplation or projection toward the idea of emptiness. This is not to reject the possibility of emptiness but to emphasise the core of the contemplation of emptiness is on becoming, possibility, that I claim, finite human freedom. Heidegger in his lecture, in this respect, on *Schelling's treatise on the Essence of Human freedom* (1985, p. 123) specifically deals with the idea of becoming and freedom.<sup>12</sup>

In this light, the idea of nothingness is nothing other than the moment of *becoming*. Nothingness as becoming nothing is not separated from the one who contemplates nothing in terms of projection. In this formula, one may claim *I am nothingness*. This is the way that I understand the idea of freedom in terms of possibility and becoming with the relation with *mu*.

Such contemplation is essentially taken part with temporality in terms of finite human being. In this respect, one may claim that the Manifesto itself suggests an idea of freedom as a project of education. The attempt to re-focus on freedom in education should be appreciated, though I think that the authors' attempt to step outside time, to be a-temporal, does not make sense. My aim in the paper has been to reaffirm the ontological relationship between freedom and time, which reveals the nature of education as project. Education as project is inconceivable without time. Hence, freedom is discussed in this paper not as an ideal but a ground for education.<sup>13</sup>

## NOTES

1. This paper uses the abbreviations as thus: M - Biesta, G. and Säfström, C.A. (2011) "A Manifesto for Education", *Policy Futures in Education* 9 (5), pp. 540-547; BT - Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and Time*, translated by Macquarrie, J. and Robinson, E. (New York, Harper); CT - Heidegger, M. (2011) *The Concept of Time*, translated by Farin, I. (London, Continuum).
2. <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Manifesto> (retrieved 20 Feb 2013)
3. As Biesta once considered elsewhere (2010) it is the traditional thought since Immanuel Kant. In fact, much literature has been devoted to criticising the problem of the temporal understanding of freedom and all these kinds of educational ideas that are placed in the end of education. And the criticism of the authors is of the linear or modern conception of time which has developed throughout traditional education.
4. In fact, Biesta makes clear that non-temporality does not reject temporality or historicity in education: 'This, as we try to argue, is not to take history out of education, but rather to take history seriously, to believe that history can be made, because history is not the unfolding of a programme, but an imperfect sequence of events.' (Biesta, 2012, p. 2) Also by claiming to 'take time out of education' Biesta suggests thinking and doing education outside of the confines of a certain temporality. This paper develops other possibilities of understanding of temporality in education in which freedom plays a key role.

5. Because we exist as being this and that, Heidegger explains we exist in anxiety. Authenticity and inauthenticity do not indicate truth and falsity, respectively. It is a matter of possibility. "But to the extent that this Being towards its potentiality-for-Being is itself characterized by freedom, Dasein can comport itself towards its possibilities, even unwillingly; it can be inauthentically; and factually it is inauthentically, proximally and for the most part." (BT, p. 237) Such possibility thus is not about one's own pure capacity to control whether or not one is authentic.
6. I have not attempted to develop the idea of freedom in relation to resoluteness and authenticity. This is partly because of limits of space but also because I wanted not to implicate Heidegger in an anthropological and ethical interpretation. To put this differently, the emphasis of freedom in this paper is not to do with matters of choice but with the nature of possibility in projecting. Freedom is grasped in this paper as a possibility of being and time. In education, this freedom cannot be an ideal of its practice for it is its ground, as a project which can be this and that.
7. The original expression of Kiesel is as follows: In a summary of the prepositional nexus of *Being and Time*, Heidegger had already emphasized that the relations of the in-order-to can be understood only "if the Dasein understands something of the nature of the for-the-sake-of-itself". An in-order-to (present) can be revealed only insofar as the for-the-sake-of (future) that belongs to a potentiality-for-being is understood. (Kiesel, 2005, p. 197)
8. [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=programme&searchmode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=programme&searchmode=none) (retrieved 20 April 2013)
9. To make more sense on the meaning of project, let's imagine one virtual case. A shooting game competition is announced. It is a team based match and I am a member of a shooting team. The team decides to sign up for the match. The team needs training. All training circumstances are set up: a coach for the team, and a training programme, guns for sure, and the field. We set up a schedule for the training, we give a trial. We find something wrong, so what we can try is: change the guns, change to a different programme, and get another advice from the coach etc. We prepare the tactic and strategy: arrange the order of shooters for the match.
10. Projecting does not separate the participant from the leader. In project, there may be some roles like leader or so, but all are involved in a certain task. And because it is project, when the given task is over, it is not guaranteed to work for other team or even for the very same in the future. The members of the team may carry on the team as usual but not quite in the same way that they developed in the project. After the match, the ordinary life goes on. Likewise, education is project in a sense with the positive notion of time in projecting, which is temporal (no linear, but accidental and spontaneous) and is made through the participant. As claimed above, besides, projecting is not separated from the matter of being here. Since by understanding, we are being in the world. In terms of projecting, education is intensively and inherently an exercise of freedom as possibility. In other words, the nature of education is remained in time in the name of freedom.
11. Futural here, in the relation with freedom in finitude, consists of historicity of being-in-the-world: '*Only an entity which, in its Being, is essentially futural so that it is free for its death and can let itself be thrown back upon its factual "there" by shattering itself against death—that is to say, only an entity which, as futural, is equiprimordially in the process of having-been, can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be in the moment of vision for 'its time'. Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate—that is to say, authentic historicity.*' (BT, p. 437)
12. This is related to Biesta's adaptation of Levinas on choice and responsibility. (Biesta, 2012, p. 9) The possible relation between the understanding of being-in-the-world and subjectification would require another paper. But primarily there seems to be a relation between them in terms of freedom. And the difference is a matter of temporality.
13. The indicated lecture was held in 1936 which is tentatively regarded before Heidegger's *Turning* or earlier works. For the intensive discussion on the idea of nothingness and becoming in Heidegger's later works, P. Standish (2012), *Pure Experience and Transcendence Down*, in: Naoko, S., Standish, P. (eds.) *Education and the Kyoto School of Philosophy* (London: Springer), pp. 19-26.
14. This paper was presented at The 6th International Colloquium between the Institute of Education, University of London, and the Graduate School of Education, Kyoto University in 2013. The version of

the text published here has been shaped by the discussion at the colloquium, which was focused on the idea of nothingness in Heidegger and the Kyoto School. The understanding of nothingness that I offer here is adapted from Heidegger with reference to an analysis of the Chinese character, *mu*. In 2014 a more developed version of the original argument was published in the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (2014, 48 (3), pp. 385-399).

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